The A.Q. Miller School's online master's degree has been named in the Top 10 of the nation's most affordable online programs in journalism and mass communications. The ranking comes from Online U, which has been in the business of ranking affordability and other factors relating to potential students' choices among online degree programs since 2014. K-State is seventh on the list.

The A.Q. Miller School of Journalism and Mass Communications launched its online master's a year ago after research among alumni and related constituencies revealed a significant demand for such a degree, primarily in Kansas City, Wichita and other metropolitan areas. The degree consists of 30 hours and is primarily focused on strategic communications classes with grounding in mass communication theory and research. The program allows students to earn credit for on-the-job research and provides electives in such areas as strategic communication management and audience analytics. In the inaugural year, the program has attracted students from Kansas, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Texas and Maryland.

"We envisioned this program to bring value to busy professionals who seek to upgrade their credentials or are interested in leadership positions at media organizations, nonprofits, or public relations and advertising agencies," said Dr. Raluca Cozma, associate director for graduate studies in the A.Q. Miller School. "This ranking by Online U shows that our program brings a good return on our students' investment, while allowing them the flexibility to work on a solid degree remotely, from all corners of the world." Cozma added that a new course on social media data visualization has been added to the program, and a new graduate certificate designed to train high school media advisers is being developed in cooperation with the Journalism Education Association, the national organization for scholastic journalism that is headquartered in Kedzie Hall.

"During this time of escalating student debt, it's gratifying to know that we are offering an affordable degree that meets market demands," said Dr. Steven Smathers, director of the A.Q. Miller School.

Congratulations to master's students Holly Speck and Zhixian Fala Lin, who are graduating this spring! JMC is proud of you and thanks you for your exemplary work as GTAs.
Former master’s student Jana Thomas, who is now a strategic communications instructor at the A.Q. Miller School, and second-year master’s student Holly (Speck) Pate share author credit in a chapter in the newly released book “Recasting the Disney Princess in an Era of New Media and Social Movements” edited by Dr. Shearon Roberts, Xavier University of Louisiana. Their chapter, titled “From Princess to Heroine: Recasting Representations,” primarily explores how Marvel and Lucasfilm’s female characters, narratives, fandom, and economic dominance at the box office shape popular culture for a new generation of fans ready for ‘girl power.’

The book is available on Amazon and examines Walt Disney Company’s most iconic franchise, the Disney princesses, to evaluate how the company has addressed the patriarchy its own legacy cemented. “We all know about the ‘typical’ princess who waits for a man to save her and is mostly known for her beauty rather than her brains,” Holly explained. “However, in the era of recent social movements such as #MeToo, more attention has been drawn to the issues that can arise from this princess persona. Now we have powerful female role models popping up in movies and television, which demonstrates to young girls and boys (and really all of us) about female strength and possibility.”

Each chapter of the book focuses on different televised representations of women and girls, and the Heroines chapter examines the shifting roles of women in Marvel (Jana) and Lucasfilm (Holly), both owned by Disney. “I’ve been a movie fanatic my entire life, so when the opportunity came along to write about one of my favorite genre of movies, I jumped at the chance,” Jana said. “I became a fan of Marvel comics while raising three boys who, when little, loved to dress up and act out their favorite characters. We’ve really enjoyed watching the expanding Marvel Cinematic Universe, seeing every new film in theaters. As a media researcher, I’ve also noticed the expanding representation of women in these films.” Jana dedicated the chapter to her two nieces, who – with Disney’s purchase of Marvel – never have to choose between being a Disney princess and a superhero. “Because of heroines like Captain Marvel and Shuri of Wakanda, they can be BOTH,” Jana said.

“Although we have all ‘seen’ a shift in culture toward female empowerment, to actually quantify and explore this expansion of representation in a familiar film saga - Star Wars - was a unique opportunity to be both creative and analytical,” Holly said. “It was also especially fun to delve into a topic that I had grown up watching with my family. My parents (embarrassingly) dressed up as Princess Leia and Darth Vader EVERY Halloween.”

FORMER JMC MASTER’S STUDENT QUAN LONG PUBLISHES JOURNAL ARTICLE ON LIVE STREAMING SERVICES WITH DR. ALEC TEFERTILLER

April 1 came with good news for Quan Long, who graduated from the JMC master’s program in May 2018. Her article co-authored with her adviser, Dr. Alec Tefertiller, was published in the International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction.

Titled “China’s New Mania for Live Streaming: Gender Differences in Motives and Uses of Social Live Streaming Services,” the study uses survey research to examine gender differences in social live streaming service (SLSS) use by focusing on audience needs for real-life communication, escape, fun seeking, partnership seeking, and social interaction.

“It was such a great experience working with Quan on this project,” Dr. Tefertiller said. “She found out what professors already know: we love to work with graduate students on research. It was a great seeing her walk through the publication process and come out on top. This is the first of what I imagine will be many more articles for Quan.” Quan currently lives in Phoenix, Arizona, where she works as User Experience (UX) Designer at User10, LLC.
NANCY MUTURI ADVANCES KNOWLEDGE ON HEALTH AND RISK COMMUNICATION

Faculty Spotlight

Professor Nancy Muturi (Ph.D., University of Iowa) has established a research agenda in health communication, primarily investigating the methods of public health promotion and disease prevention. "This is a broad topic, but in communication we focus on knowledge, perception of risk, and the best strategies to motivate behavior change for healthier outcomes," Dr. Muturi said. "I got interested in public health topics as an undergraduate student at the University of Nairobi when I conducted my honors thesis on sexual and reproductive health among women in rural and low-income communities. That led to my focus on HIV and AIDS, which has been central to my research in the past 20 years or so with projects in Africa, the Caribbean, and here in the U.S."

Recently, Dr. Muturi has been working collaboratively with colleagues in the College of Health and Human Services on childhood obesity in low-income communities in Kansas, Ohio, and South Dakota. These collaborations have led to several conference papers and publications. In her Health Communication (MC 750) class that she teaches online this spring, students learn how communication is applied from individual to national and international levels, including policy advocacy and design of strategic health campaigns. "As we have seen with COVID-19, everyone, regardless of the nature of organization they work for, needs some health and risk communication skills to protect themselves and others," Dr. Muturi said.

As a core member of the Leadership Communication interdisciplinary doctoral program, Dr. Muturi is also writing grant proposals to support larger projects and sponsor Ph.D. students. "A few of them have interest in health communication, and I would love to work with them, but that will require extramural funding. I have also been establishing collaborations across campus on a few projects and hope this will eventually lead to some funding," Dr. Muturi said.

Dr. Muturi is scheduled to teach Communication Theory (MC 765) in the fall. When not researching or teaching, Dr. Muturi loves to garden, dance, and travel the world. "I have plots at the community gardens where I interact with other gardeners, some of whom originate from other parts of the world. It is like a global community, and I have learned a few things from those interactions."

Dat Tran, first-year master's student. Dat came to K-State in 2019 from Ho Chi Minh City, a southern city in Vietnam. "I would say fate brought me to K-State. Back in 2018, I was looking for a change, a boost, to be precise, in my career when I learned about the master’s program at JMC via an instructor at the school. I find the curriculum intriguing, and JMC also provides the financial aid I need to travel and study in the United States, so I decided to try my luck. It was one of the best decisions I have made so far."

What are your research interests?
"My current research focuses on internet memes as well as their political, social, and cultural impacts on our society. Other than that, I also pay interest to media technology and participatory journalism."

What are your long-term plans?
"I look forward to pursuing a life in academia, so attending a doctorate program is the next move I have in mind. I want to keep studying and doing as much research as I can. Deploying a participatory journalism project in Vietnam is also one of my goals, but perhaps I should save it for a better time in the future."

Any hobbies?
"I was a drummer in Vietnam. My band released some recordings, but, sadly, I haven’t been able to play since I moved to Manhattan, Kansas, for several reasons. I also like anime."

SPOTLIGHT GRADUATE STUDENT
**MAN-ON-THE-COUCH INTERVIEWS:** GRADUATE STUDENTS SHARE HOW THEY RELIEVE STRESS DURING ISOLATION

Dat Tran: "I try to stay busy instead of in bed all day. I contact friends, and we compose music together. I work on research with my classmates. If possible, I plan to take a stroll every couple of days to get some vitamin D."

Barikisu Issaka: "I talk with family members back home in Ghana more than ever."

Holly Speck: "I take daily walks with my puppy, Benji. I try to gravitate toward positive news on social media and be thankful I can work from home. I focus on creative projects I've always wanted to do and also teach an online exercise class via Zoom."

Nick McNamara: "As a journalist at News Radio KMAN, I still need to go to work. I spend a lot of time sanitizing radio equipment."

Turki Alturki: "My daughters keep me busy all day. When they go to sleep, I finally get to work. That's why I might e-mail you at 2 a.m."

Ryan Urban: "I'm knee-deep in projects. I try to maintain a schedule. For instance, after our Zoom class with Dr. Groshek, I'd run around the neighborhood for a while, take a shower, and then start doing my homework."

Sara Savatovic: "I get to talk with my family in Serbia more often than before. I talk with my sister every day, and my mom even learned how to use Viber to keep in touch."

Cody Friesen: "I run a lot in the Konza Prairie, and I'm also biking all the trails I've never seen in my five years here. I play video games with my brother, catch up with family, and organize stuff I put off for a long time. I also watch old sports games I once covered."

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**FALL 2020 GRADUATE COURSE OPTIONS**

**On campus:**

- **MC 612 | Gender, Class, Race, and the Media** - Dr. Nancy Muturi
- **MC 745 | Mass Communication Law** - Dr. Nikhil Moro
- **MC 765 | Communication Theory** - Dr. Nancy Muturi
- **MC 780 | Research Methods In Mass Communication** - Dr. Raluca Cozma

**Online:**

- **MC 683 | Reputation Management** - Dr. Barb DeSanto
- **MC 740 | Strategic Communication Management** - Dr. Barb DeSanto
- **MC 745 | Mass Communication Law** - Dr. Nikhil Moro
- **MC 820 | Digital Media Audiences and Analytics** - Dr. Jacob Groshek

*A new online offering during Summer 2020:*

- **MC 801 | Advanced Qualitative Research Methods** - Dr. Barb DeSanto